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West Asian Manic Monday Focus

Mon 7:38 pm +00:00, 16 Dec 2024

posted by *danceaway*

It's a jumble with many events

KARL SANCHEZ
DEC 16



The many podcasts focused on Syria's implosion and elimination as a geopolitical actor along with Alastair Crooke's SCF essay and the supposed statement issued by Assad explaining his actions makes a perfect storm all by themselves, but before all those occurred Putin made his annual major address to the Extended Board meeting of the Ministry of Defense, which merits separate reporting. So how to proceed?

The podcasts with Judge Napolitano and Crooke's essay are what most readers will want first, IMO. The chat with Crooke should be followed by the chat with Pepe Escobar. There's a technical issue at the end of the Crooke chat that negates the Judge's important closing question. At Escobar's VK and perhaps his Telegram or X (I cannot access either), there's a photostat copy of Assad's supposed statement which I've reproduced below:

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Statement by President Bashar al-Assad on the Circumstances Leading to his Departure from Syria

Moscow – 16 December 2024

As terrorism spread across Syria and ultimately reached Damascus on the evening of Saturday 7th December 2024, questions arose about the president's fate and whereabouts. This occurred amidst a flood of misinformation and narratives far removed from the truth, aimed at recasting international terrorism as a liberation revolution for Syria.

At such a critical juncture in the nation's history, where truth must take precedence, it is essential to address these distortions. Unfortunately, the prevailing circumstances at the time, including a total communication blackout for security reasons, delayed the release of this statement. This does not replace a detailed account of the events that unfolded, which will be provided when the opportunity allows.

First, my departure from Syria was neither planned nor did it occur during the final hours of the battles, as some have claimed. On the contrary, I remained in Damascus, carrying out my duties until the early hours of Sunday 8th December 2024. As terrorist forces infiltrated Damascus, I moved to Latakia in coordination with our Russian allies to oversee combat operations. Upon arrival at the Hmeimim airbase that morning, it became clear that our forces had completely withdrawn from all battle lines and that the last army positions had fallen. As the field situation in the area continued to deteriorate, the Russian military base itself came under intensified attack by drone strikes. With no viable means of leaving the base, Moscow requested that the base's command arrange an immediate evacuation to Russia on the evening of Sunday 8th December. This took place a day after the fall of Damascus, following the collapse of the final military positions and the resulting paralysis of all remaining state institutions.

At no point during these events did I consider stepping down or seeking refuge, nor was such a proposal made by any individual or party. The only course of action was to continue fighting against the terrorist onslaught.

I reaffirm that the person who, from the very first day of the war, refused to barter the salvation of his nation for personal gain, or to compromise his people in exchange for numerous offers and enticements is the same person who stood alongside the officers and soldiers of the army on the front lines, just meters from terrorists in the most dangerous and intense battlefields. He is the same person who, during the darkest years of the war, did not leave but remained with his family alongside his people, confronting terrorism under bombardment and the recurring threats of terrorist incursions into the capital over fourteen years of war. Furthermore, the person who has never abandoned the resistance in Palestine and Lebanon, nor betrayed his allies who stood by him, cannot possibly be the same person who would forsake his own people or betray the army and nation to which he belongs.

I have never sought positions for personal gain but have always considered myself as a custodian of a national project, supported by the faith of the Syrian people, who believed in its vision. I have carried an unwavering conviction in their will and ability to protect the state, defend its institutions, and uphold their choices to the very last moment.

When the state falls into the hands of terrorism and the ability to make a meaningful contribution is lost, any position becomes void of purpose, rendering its occupation meaningless. This does not, in any way, diminish my profound sense of belonging to Syria and her people – a bond that remains unshaken by any position or circumstance. It is a belonging filled with hope that Syria will once again be free and independent.

END

Here're my series of comments about that as I learned more over time from watching the linked podcasts:

*A very meager amount of information that doesn't explain much of anything.
IMO, many Syrians will spit on this statement.*

*Crooke's testimony to Judge Napolitano today is damning. the biggest point:
Assad gave the order for the SAA to stand-down.*

*Watched your chat with the Judge where you present the evidence that this is
likely some sort of forgery to smear Assad as what other purpose could it serve?
Apparently, you familiarized yourself with Krainer's "Trap" thesis, which when
you follow the money and the joint non-reactions of Russia and Iran seems
plausible, but we need to wait and see what happens.*

And then there're Nima's guests that I haven't had time to listen to, which I'm sure will add more to the mix, and perhaps mix it up more. Those of us investigating the Syrian event will need to invest time to hear and sift all these various inputs while looking at the narrative being produced by the Imperialists/Zionists. The last component of this report will be Alastair Crooke's SCF essay. I had big problems with the SCF site in getting it to load and then properly load the essay—ten reboots and much patience was required. So, reproduced below is that essay:

A New Geopolitical Map is Unfolding: The End of Syria (and of "Palestine" For Now)

Syria has entered the abyss – the demons of al-Qaeda, ISIS, and the most intransigent elements of the Muslim Brotherhood are circling the skies. There is chaos, looting, fear, and a terrible passion for revenge scalds the blood. Street executions are rife.

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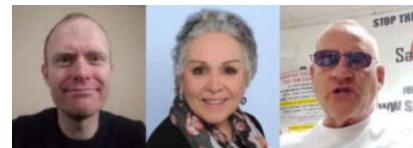
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Date: 9 March 2025

Time: 11:00 - 16:30

Location: The Glanrhod Coronation Club, Glannant, Ystradgynlais, Swansea, SA9 1BQ

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Speakers: John Kitson – Claire Edwards – Mark Steele

Each speaker will be focusing on a different aspect of 5G and associated subjects

Event hosted by Gary Fraughen

Info and Booking

The Glanrhod Coronation Club, Glannant, Ystradgynlais, Swansea, SA9 1BQ

The Alternative View Presents Roger Anderton

Date: 4 May 2025

Time: 11:00 - 16:00

Location: The Assembly Rooms, Glastonbury, Somerset, UK

Maybe Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) and its leader, Al-Joulani, (following Turkish instruction), thought to control things. But HTS is an umbrella label like Al-Qa'eda, ISIS and An-Nusra, and its factions have already descended into factional fighting. The Syrian 'state' dissolved in the middle of the night; the police and army went home, leaving weapons depots open for the Shebab to loot. The prison doors were flung (or prised) open. Some, no doubt, were political prisoners; but many were not. Some of the most vicious inmates now roam the streets.

The Israelis – within days – totally eviscerated the defence infrastructure of the state in more than 450 air strikes: missile air defences, Syrian air force helicopters and aircraft, the navy and the armouries – all destroyed in the "largest air operation in Israel's history".

Syria no longer exists as a geo-political entity. In the east, Kurdish forces (with U.S. military support) are seizing the oil and agricultural resources of the former state. Erdogan's forces and proxies are engaged in an attempt to crush the Kurdish enclave completely (although the U.S. has now mediated a ceasefire of sorts). And in the south-west, Israeli tanks have seized the Golan and land beyond to within 20 kms of Damascus. In 2015 the Economist magazine wrote: "Black gold under the Golan: Geologists in Israel think they have found oil – in very tricky territory". Israeli and American oilmen believe they have discovered a bonanza in this most inconvenient of sites.

And a big impediment – Syria – to the West's energy ambitions has just dissipated.

The strategic political balancer to Israel that was Syria since 1948, has vanished. And the earlier 'easing of tensions' between the Sunni sphere and Iran has been disrupted by the rude intervention of ISIS rebrands and by Ottoman revanchism working with Israel, via American (and British) intermediaries. The Turks have never really reconciled themselves to the 1923 Treaty that concluded World War I, by which they ceded what is now northern Syria to the new state of Syria.

Within days, Syria has been dismembered, partitioned and balkanised. So why do Israel and Turkiye still bomb? The bombing started the moment Bashar Al-Assad departed – because Turkiye and Israel worry that today's conquerors may prove ephemeral, and may soon themselves be displaced. You don't need to own a thing in order to control it. As powerful states in the region, Israel and Turkey will wish to exercise control not just over resources, but over the vital regional crossroads and passageway that was Syria.

Inevitably however, 'Greater Israel' is likely, at some point, to butt heads with Erdogan's Ottomanesque revanchism. Equally the Saudi-Egyptian-UAE front will not welcome the resurgence of either ISIS re-brands, nor the Turkish-inspired and Ottomanised Muslim Brotherhood. The latter poses an immediate threat to Jordan, now bordering the new revolutionary entity.

Such concerns may push these Gulf States closer to Iran. Qatar, as purveyor of arms and funding to the HTS cartel, may again be ostracised by other Gulf leaders.

The new geo-political map poses many direct questions about Iran, Russia, China and the BRICS. Russia has played a complex hand in the Middle East – on the one hand, prosecuting an escalating defensive war versus NATO powers and managing key energy interests; while, at the same time, trying to moderate Resistance operations toward Israel in order to keep relations with the U.S. from deteriorating utterly. Moscow hopes – without great conviction – that a dialogue with the incoming U.S. President might emerge, at some point in the future.

Moscow likely will draw the conclusion that ceasefire 'deals' such as the Astana Agreement on jihadist containment within the boundaries of the Idlib autonomous zone in Syria are not worth the paper on which they were written. Turkiye – an Astana guarantor – stabbed Moscow in the back. Likely, it will make the Russian leadership more hard-nosed over Ukraine, and of any western talk of ceasefires.

Iran's Supreme Leader spoke on 11 December: "There should be no doubt that what happened in Syria was plotted in the command rooms of the United States and Israel. We have evidence for this. One of the neighbouring countries of Syria also played a role, but the primary planners are the U.S. and the Zionist regime". In this context, Ayatollah Khamenei quashed speculations about any weakening of the will to resist.

Turkiye's proxy victory in Syria nonetheless may prove Pyrrhic. Erdogan's Foreign Minister, Hakan Fidan, lied to Russia, the Gulf States and Iran about the nature of what was being cooked-up in Syria. But the mess now is Erdogan's. Those that he doubled-crossed will at some point extract pay-back.

Iran seemingly, will revert to its earlier stance of gathering together the disparate threads of regional resistance to fight the Al-Qa'eda reincarnation. It will not turn its back on China, nor the BRICS project. Iraq – recalling the ISIS atrocities of its civil war – will join with Iran, as will Yemen. Iran will be aware

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that the remaining nodes of the former Syrian Army might well, at some point, enter into the fight against the HTS cartel. Maher Al-Assad took his entire armoured division with him into exile in Iraq on the night of Bashar Al-Assad's departure.

China will not be pleased at events in Syria. The Uyghurs played a prominent part in the Syria uprising (there were an estimated 30,000 Uyghurs in Idlib, under training by Türkiye (which sees Uyghurs as the original component of the Turkic nation). China too, will likely see the overthrow of Syria as underlining putative western threats to their own energy security lines that run through Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Finally, western interests have been fighting over Middle Eastern resources for centuries – and ultimately that is what lies behind the war today.

Is he, or isn't he, pro-war, people ask about Trump, since he has already signalled that energy dominance will be a key strategy for his Administration.

Well, western countries are deep in debt; their fiscal room for manoeuvre is shrinking fast, and bond-holders are beginning to mutiny. There is a race to find a new collateral for fiat currencies. It used to be gold; since the 1970s it was oil, but the petrodollar has faltered. The Anglo-Americans would love to have Iran's oil again – as they did until the 1970s – to collateralise and build a new money system tied to the real value inherent in commodities.

But Trump says he wants to 'end wars' and not start them. Does the re-drawing of the geo-political map make some global entente between east and west more, or less, likely?

For all the talk of possible Trump 'deals' with Iran and Russia, it is likely too early to say whether they will – or can – materialise.

Seemingly, Trump has to secure the domestic 'deal' first, before he will know whether he has the scope for foreign policy deals.

It seems that the Ruling Structures (notably the 'Never-Trump' element in the Senate) will allow Trump considerable latitude on key nominations for domestic Departments and Agencies that manage U.S. political and economic affairs (which is Trump's key concern) – and will also permit a certain discretion on, shall we say, the 'warfare' Departments that targeted Trump over the last years, such as the FBI and the Department of Justice.

The putative 'deal' seems to be that his nominations will still need to undergo Senate confirmation and must broadly be 'on-side' with Inter-Agency foreign policy (notably on Israel).

The Inter-Agency grandees, however, reportedly insist on their veto over nominations affecting the deepest structures of foreign policy. And therein lies the crux of matters.

Israelis generally are celebrating their 'victories'. Will this euphoria weigh with U.S. business élites? Hizbullah is contained, Syria is demilitarised, and Iran is not on Israel's border. The threat to Israel today is of a qualitatively lower order. Is this, in itself, sufficient to allow tensions to ease, or to see some wider understandings to emerge? Much will hang on Netanyahu's own political circumstances. Should the PM emerge from his criminal Court process relatively unscathed, would he need to take the big 'bet' of military action against Iran, with the geo-political map so suddenly transformed?

Crooke is correct to end asking many questions for much remains unexplained. I must also add Nima's chat with Alex Krainer to the mix of podcasts. One common denominator is shared by all these analysts: too much remains hidden to compile a convincing explanation for the events witnessed. Yes, there are portions that appear well known, while too many are not. One fact is certain: Syria as a geopolitical actor no longer exists; there is now a vacuum. Chaotic anarchy and rule of the gun is now the norm, while warfare is ongoing in several regions. Plus, no credible media is on the scene to report what's happening, so all information must be questioned for credibility. Remnants of the Syrian Army remain in Iraq and in the mountains in the Latakia region. I'm not as morose as some because worse events have occurred in this region over its history. What Team Trump will do is the major question as well as how ambitious will Erdogan prove to be?

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